

KNOW AND ACT

Sexuality education is a human right

Sexual education begins when a child is born and continues through the entire human life course. People collect the knowledge and skills from sexual education based on which they make decisions on their sexual well-being. Sexual education is an essential sexual right.

Sexuality is a human resource

Sexuality is perceived as a resource for humans in holistic sexuality education.

The distributed information must be unbiased and based on scientific research. It must be presented in a way that allows presenting gender and sexual diversity of human sexuality.

Consideration of values and the concept of human as well as the safety of the sexual education situation are key elements of sexual education.

Sexuality education has multiple levels

- **Sexuality education at national level**, includes focusing information distribution on one theme at a time and is most commonly aimed at large groups of people via campaigns and/or the media.
- **Education** is dialogical activity aimed at a group of people.
- **Guidance** may occur in groups or be aimed at an individual. It is often functional and dialogical.
- **Counselling** occurs between a counsellor and an individual or a couple. The counselling is based on the personal needs for knowledge and processing of the issue of the person receiving the counselling.

Sexual education is provided by official and unofficial educators. Official actors include, for example, teachers and health care professionals. Unofficial educators include parents and persons close to the child or young person.

Cooperation between different stakeholders is important.



Sexuality education

means learning about the cognitive, emotional, social, interactive and physical aspects of sexuality.

- WHO, 2010

Basic elements of sexual education

- Sexual Attitude Reassessment of the educator's own sexuality, values and concept of human
- process of all dimensions of sexuality: biological, psychical, social, mental and ethical dimensions
- emphasis of positive sexual rights and well-being



How is sexuality education implemented?

Schools must prepare sexuality education plans. This is done in a multiprofessional work group. In schools and early childhood education, the work group includes both teachers and school health care representatives and other partners in the area, such as youth services and parish youth workers.

- Sexuality education for children and young people is planned in cooperation with the target group and in a situation-oriented manner.
- At best, the activities are reciprocal and continue from early childhood education all the way to old age.
- The education must take into account gender diversity and the varying needs of different genders while paying respect to equality.
- This is done according to the age and developmental level of the children.
- Sexuality education supports the self-image and identity of the growing and developing person and is therefore also an essential part of activities preventing social exclusion.

Sexuality education material supports the work of the educator and the learning of the learner. The material must be norm critical (critical towards the discriminatory norms in the society), accessible and respectful towards diversity. It is good to provide the material in connection to education and counselling facilities and also online.

Sexuality educator training provides professionals with capabilities to act as official sexual educators. Regular further training is a precondition for professional skills.

Assessment and development of sexuality education is an ongoing process. As pedagogics and communications develop, plans and their implementation are assessed regularly, at least once every three years. Sexuality education material must also be reassessed every 3–5 years.

Sexual health services as part of education

Sexual and reproductive health services for young people must be provided according to the principle of local services. Instant access to the services must be enabled. The services must be free of charge and organised in a manner that the young person is able to get help and advice preferably from the same place. Electronic transactions must be enabled when possible. Education, guidance and counselling professionals must work in cooperation.

Sexual and reproductive health services for adults are organised as a part of student, conscript, occupational health and elderly care services, but health centres must also provide counselling. Couples counselling is an essential part of the services for young people and adults.

Further information



Promote, prevent, influence – action programme for the promotion of sexual and reproductive health 2014–2020.

Reija Klemetti, Eija Raussi-Lehto (ed.). National Institute for Health and Welfare. Guide 33/2014

The priority areas of the action programme include children and adolescents, supporting the resources of parturients, multiculturalism and men's sexual and reproductive health.

www.thl.fi/kirjakauppa

Know and Act cards on many different topics have been prepared for professionals. Read more:

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Sexual and reproductive health

www.thl.fi/seliverkostokirje

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